

Preface

The effort to rebuild Kuwait was unique, complex, and challenging. The reconstruction was rooted in various authorities and paid for from various pots of money. Both the funding and the work itself were diffuse and diverse in unprecedented ways. My goal was to give a structure and sense of order to the complex story of how a small, independent country recovered in record time from the devastating effects of a seven-month occupation by Iraqi troops, in large part through the efforts of the U.S. Army. To promote greater order and clarity, I have presented the operation both topically and chronologically.

This book originated in 1991 when I was documenting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' involvement in the Persian Gulf War. Documenting the Corps' critical role in the Kuwait recovery operation after the end of the war was a natural progression. The Corps of Engineers, however, was not the only Army element with significant involvement in the recovery operations. Recognizing this, the U.S. Army Center of Military History requested that I broaden my account to encompass the activities of the other Army elements.

The story of how American soldiers, working alongside Kuwait's residents, helped bring the country back to life within a few short months is truly remarkable. I feel fortunate to have witnessed some of the recovery process firsthand, to have talked to some of the participants, and now to tell their story. I made two trips to Kuwait to collect records, interview participants, and tour project sites such as the Parliament Building and Doha power plant. I made the first trip into Kuwait a week after the Iraqi withdrawal when the sky was still dark with smoke from the oil fires and water and electrical power were in short supply. There I marveled at the courage and commitment of the soldiers and civilians who worked in that dangerous and stressful environment. When I returned the following September, few visible signs of the occupation remained. The city was again bustling, as residents went about their day-to-day activities. There could be no better tribute to the hard work and dedication of the American soldiers and civilians and their Kuwaiti partners.

As this project comes to a close, I have many to thank. Over the past six years, I have received continued assistance from many individuals at

the headquarters of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Corps' Transatlantic Programs Center, Task Force Freedom, Third U.S. Army, and the Pentagon. These individuals provided me with documents and patiently explained critical events or processes. I am particularly indebted to retired Lt. Col. Michael Fisher, retired Lt. Col. Gordon Quesenberry, John Jones, the G-3 staff at Third U.S. Army, officials in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Logistics and Environment, and the many individuals at Transatlantic Programs Center.

Retired Brig. Gen. Ralph Locurcio deserves special thanks. From its inception, he gave this project his enthusiastic support, read various drafts, and has waited patiently for its completion. Both Locurcio and retired Maj. Gen. Patrick Kelly took time for interviews and gave me unrestricted access to their files and to their staffs. Like Locurcio, Kelly graciously reviewed the final manuscript.

Former Ambassador Edward Gnehm, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Shaheen, Maj. Gen. Howard Mooney, Maj. Gen. Robert S. Frix, and many other soldiers and civilians agreed to be interviewed and took time out of their often hectic schedules to share their insights, fill in factual details, or explain complex processes to me. Since the record of written documents was incomplete, their interviews became an invaluable source of information and perspective.

Col. David E. Peixotto, Russell Plaisance, Wynne Fuller, and Lt. Col. Albert F. Kaminsky—all key participants in the recovery operations—sat for interviews, read draft chapters, and provided comments. Maj. Gen. Howard Mooney, Col. Ed King, and Col. Arthur H. Walz, who led the civil affairs effort in Kuwait, were particularly helpful in reviewing the chapters dealing with civil affairs activities.

Several historians and many subject matter experts reviewed parts or all of the manuscript. Frank Schubert with the Joint History Office read the entire manuscript and contributed his own keen perspective and analysis. Martin A. Reuss and Paul Walker of the Corps of Engineers Office of History read the entire manuscript and offered comments. Joan Kibler at the Transatlantic Programs Center read the manuscript twice with a careful eye for detail. My friends and coworkers at the Corps of Engineers, Frank Bizzoco, Harry Painton, and Jim Parker also read the draft manuscript.

Jim Parker from the Corps' office in Savannah, Georgia, who at the time was serving as General Kelly's public affairs officer in Kuwait, made sure that I got where I needed to be during my second visit. Jonas Jordan, also from the Savannah office, provided almost all of the superb photographs that so vividly capture not only the damage in Kuwait but the strength and resilience of the Kuwaiti people. I am grateful to

Marilyn Hunter for her skilled editing and unflagging enthusiasm for this project. At the Center of Military History, Beth MacKenzie and John Birmingham designed and formatted the book. Susan Carroll compiled the index.

The views expressed in this volume are mine and do not reflect official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.

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